

in Nov - Perry
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Preached at the *1-8*

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. Joseph Perry,

TO THE

Pastoral Care of a Church in WINDSOR:

JUNE 11th 1755.

By *SAMUEL PORTER, A.M.*

Pastor of a Church in *Sherburne.* *K.*

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AN

Ordination SERMON.



I COR. ii. 2.

*FOR I determined not to know any thing
among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and
him crucified.*



THESE are the words of the great apostle *Paul*, who was a man of a superiour natural genius, which had also receiv'd great improvement by education. He was no stranger to polite literature, nor to the beauty and power of oratory; for it appears by several specimens left on sacred record, that he had the art of perswasion to a great degree of perfection; and being brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, one of the greatest and most famous masters among the Jews, he was taught according to the most perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and expert in

all

all the parts of Jewish learning. So that the apostle can't be suspected of casting contempt on these things, because he was unacquainted with them, or as things out of his reach. He knew also, that the *Corinthians* at that time were a polite people, greatly affecting a pomp of language, and the charms of eloquence, and that they were high pretenders to philosophical enquiries. And tho' he very well knew their taste, and was well qualify'd to gratify them in those very things which they were so fond of, yet, having rightly judg'd, that the design of the gospel, was not to captivate men's fancies, but to inform their understanding; not to gratify their curiosity; but to humble and mend their hearts; he ran the venture of disgusting their nice and delicate palates; and contented himself with preaching to them a plain Gospel, exhibiting the testimony of the great God to a plain but important fact; for the proof of which he us'd no rhetorical flourishes, but produc'd sufficient evidence by visible divine operations, as you may see in the verse before our text; *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.* As if he had said, Whatever methods others may take to recommend themselves to you, embellishing their discourses with all the flowers of rhetoric, and pretending to many curious discoveries in natural philosophy, which I know are very taking things with people of your inquisitive disposition; I chose to content my self with declaring unto you the testimony of God, and making the knowledge of CHRIST, and the way of salvation by him, as plain and intelligible to you as I could, that the gospel which is calculated to humble the pride, and to stain the glory of apostate man, might appear in it's native strength and beauty; and that your faith in it should stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. *For I was determined,* says the apostle in my text, *not to know any thing among you, save JESUS CHRIST and him crucified.* As if he had said,

I said, Tho' I knew your taste for refin'd speculations, yet I was determin'd before-hand, not to gratify this disposition, but to approve my self a faithful minister of JESUS CHRIST, and to apply my self to the business which belong'd to me as such; appearing to know, desiring and endeavouring to make known, nothing among you, *even among you*, learned *Corinthians*, who would better relish another sort of instruction, *but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified*, JESUS as the Messiah the anointed of God, the Saviour of the world, who was crucify'd without the gates of *Jerusalem*, against whom and his followers so many scandals are rais'd. I am determin'd to be so far from being ashamed of Christ and his Cross, and from regarding the scoffs and banter of the great pretenders to reason and philosophy, who may endeavour to turn these things into ridicule, that I shall make them, and the things which stand upon, and are necessarily connected with them, the main topicks of my preaching; and that even at *Corinth*, that polite and opulent City. The late excellent Dr. *Doddridge* observes upon those words, *And him crucified*: That it's probable, the Jews and Heathen might give Christ the name of *that crucified person* by way of contempt: And that the apostle in these words declares, that instead of concealing the crucifixion of Christ as an infamy and scandal, it was the main thing he insisted upon, as indeed all the doctrines of the gospel, as such, stand in a close and natural connexion with it.

For if Christ was not crucify'd, then he has not made satisfaction for the sins of men; and if he has not done this, he cannot be the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, who was to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness: And if *Jesus of Nazareth* was not the Saviour of the world, then we are yet to seek for a method of reconciliation with a just and

and holy God ; and may say of the crucifixion as is said of the resurrection, (for these things hang one upon another, and if one be false the rest cannot be prov'd true) if Christ was not crucify'd, *then is our preaching vain, your faith is also vain, ye are yet in your sins*, no atonement has been made for them by the blood of a crucify'd Christ, the guilt of them therefore still remains. There is no other name, and if JESUS CHRIST has not been deliver'd for our offences, then he cannot be risen again for our justification. The knowledge therefore of Jesus Christ, even that crucify'd person, and the things which are peculiar to his gospel, was that which, above all other things, the apostle was determin'd to do his endeavour to propagate among the *Corinthians*.

So that I observe from these words,

1. First, That the knowledge of Christ crucify'd is the most excellent, necessary, and important knowledge in the world.
2. Secondly, It should be the great aim and principal endeavour, of a gospel minister, to cultivate this knowledge in his own mind, and in the minds of his hearers.

I. In the first place, The knowledge of Christ crucify'd, is the most excellent, necessary and important knowledge in the world. ' This was doubtless the opinion of the inspir'd apostle, since he was determin'd to know nothing else, or nothing in comparison of this, among the *Corinthians*. But this will appear evident, if I mistake not, by a brief consideration of a few particulars.

As,

1. *First*, The knowledge of Christ is most excellent, as it is the knowledge of the first and most excellent of all beings.

Knowledge

Knowledge is in itself good and desirable ; the knowledge of *good*, that we may love and admire it ; the knowledge of *evil*, that we may hate and fly from it : Yet we poor short-sighted mortals should always remember, not to wade beyond our depths, lest we be drown'd ; nor to soar above our sphere lest we wander and are lost. To be sure, in matters of pure revelation, we should make the divine oracles the rule and measure of our enquiries, and be content not to be wise above what is written.

Now the excellency of knowledge depends on the objects about which it is conversant ; the more excellent the thing known, the more excellent is that knowledge. As therefore Jesus Christ, who was crucified without the gates of *Jerusalem*, was truly and properly God, as well as truly Man ; he that knows him, must know *that* God, who is the most excellent of all Beings. And this, if I mistake not, is exactly agreeable to the reasoning of our blessed Lord himself, *John 14. 7.* and on. *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also : And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.* Philip saith unto him, *Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us.* Jesus saith unto him, *have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ?* And tho' this be a Truth, which it is beyond our finite understandings to comprehend or unfold, (which I take to be the reason why so many great but unhumbled minds have dar'd to deny it, as not deigning to believe what they cannot comprehend) yet, I conceive, there is scarce any one truth more clearly revealed in the sacred oracles, than the proper Deity of the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, who was born of the virgin *Mary*, and crucify'd without the gates of *Jerusalem*.

For, besides that he is called God in several places, and particularly in the first of *John's* gospel, lest any perverse mind should misinterpret this to intend only God by office, and not God by nature, the scriptures

are clear and full in ascribing to him the incommunicable attributes of the great and only true God.

What conception can we have of the great and supreme *Jehovah*, but that he is that infinite mind, which made all things, which upholds all things, and which governs all things? and yet these things are all expressly ascrib'd to *Christ*, who was crucify'd, *John* 1. at the beginning: *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* And again, *Col.* 1. 16, 17. *For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: All things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things; and by him all things consist.* See more, *Isa.* 9. 6, 7. and *Heb.* 1. thro'out, and many other places.

Thus the knowledge of *Christ* appears to be the most excellent knowledge, as it is the knowledge of the first and most excellent of all beings.

2. *Secondly*, The knowledge of *Christ* crucify'd, and of those things which are necessarily connected with it, is most excellent, as it is conversant about those things, in which God has most remarkably display'd the riches of his wisdom and understanding.

There is enough to be learn'd from the works of creation and providence to make a great philosopher, and to give a rational intelligent mind a most exalted apprehension of that great first Cause, who by his word and wisdom has fram'd, and does govern the whole kingdom of nature; yea, it is certain, the more intimate acquaintance, and the more perfect knowledge any do gain, of these natural things, the more surprizing and amazing does that wisdom appear to be, by which these things are disposed and regulated. Yea, the many things in nature, which do far surpass the ken of our finite capacities, and the modus of whose existence we can by no means investigate,

investigate, do all still serve to raise our conceptions of him, who has so contriv'd every wheel and spring in the great circle of nature, as to compose one uniform connected beautiful machine, which reflects from every part a ray, and from the whole a most dazzling blaze of glory and honour on the wisdom and understanding of him, who plann'd and executed the whole.

But there is nothing in the whole frame of nature, that does so effectually demonstrate the unfathomable depths of divine wisdom and knowledge as the Redemption and Salvation of sinful man by a crucify'd *Christ*.

To contrive a way in which a holy, just and jealous God, may be reconcil'd to a rebel sinner, and this so as not only to secure the honour of the divine perfections and law, but so as to give peculiar lustre, and a transcendent brightness and glory to the power, wisdom, grace and goodness of the great God ; I say, to contrive this, so as to bring superabundant glory and honour to God, Father, Son and Spirit, and additional glory and happiness to the believing sinner, required such a depth of wisdom to plan, and a strength of genius to execute, as no arch-angel dares to boast, nor brightest seraph claim.

Yet he, whose wisdom nothing can baffle, has contrived and effected this, in a way which angels may well desire to pry into, and which will doubtless procure more incense of praise and honour to God, from men and angels, than all the worlds that he has made. As much more excellent then as spiritual things are than natural, and as much more as God has display'd the glory and honour of his divine perfections in the work of man's redemption than in any other of his works ; so much more excellent is the knowledge of Christ and him crucify'd, and of those things which relate to our redemption by him, than that of any other things.

Furthermore,

3. *Thirdly*, The knowledge of a crucify'd Christ is most excellent and important, as it implies and necessarily includes

includes *that*, which reflects divine honour on the adorable Trinity, and displays the excellency and harmony of all the divine attributes.

A crucify'd Christ necessarily implies sin and guilt somewhere, else how can we conceive that he shou'd suffer according to the determinate counsel of God? And since we are assur'd that *he knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, it is certain he must be deliver'd to suffer for the sin of others; and since he was a divine person, who endured the wrath of God, as well as a painful, shameful and an accursed death, it shows that the guilt of sin is infinite, seeing no less than an infinitely meritorious sacrifice was sufficient to atone for it.

It shows further, the inflexible justice of God, that he would not abate a farthing of the rigour of his law, tho' the penalty shou'd fall on his only beloved Son: It implies also, the infinite mercy of God, who was willing to part with his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, to be made an expiatory sacrifice for sin; for the mercy of God is display'd not so much in his accepting the sacrifice which Christ offer'd in the room of sinners, as in providing a sacrifice in one, who was so dear to him, and so well qualify'd to perform the task.

It implies, the condescension and compassion of the Son of God, in that he was willing to undertake, when it was not only impossible that he should need us, but impossible that we should add any thing to him.

Herein also, is divine honour reflected on the holy Spirit, by whose secret, tho' powerful energy, the whole is rendered effectual according to the determinate counsel of the blessed Trinity.

Now since these things are all included and necessarily implied, and in a most affecting and endearing light display'd in the knowledge of a crucify'd Christ, and of those things which are necessarily connected with it, what raised thoughts! what exalted ideas, must this give of the divine perfections! And what ravishing conceptions

ceptions must they have of the harmony of the divine attributes, who are bro't to the true knowledge of a crucify'd Christ, and of those things which stand in necessary connection with it !

And how sadly must they obscure and depreciate the gospel, who deny man's apostacy ! So far as I can conceive they must in effect destroy the whole gospel plant, and turn the essentials of man's redemption by a crucify'd Christ, into a needless and superfluous business.

Once more,

4. *Fourthly*, The knowledge of Christ crucify'd is the most excellent, necessary and important, as it relates to the souls of men, and has necessary and immediate connection with their eternal interests, without which all other knowledge will leave men ignorant and miserable.

Man consists of two essential parts, a soul and a body. The body, tho' a most curious piece of mechanism, and an instrument of conveying many agreeable ideas to the mind ; yet is in every respect far inferior to that noble, rational, immortal Spirit, which informs and actuates it. This is that which essentially differences man from the inferior creation. This is that which makes a man capable of being happy or miserable, and of knowing and reflecting that he is so.

Now the knowledge of Christ crucify'd has immediate relation to this immortal spirit ; and to this consideration immortal. For this especially, the Son of God forsook the realms of bliss above the stars ; for this he veild his divinity in humanity, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that he might redeem us from guilt and destruction. And as the death and crucifixion of Christ, had immediate reference to the soul of man ; so it looked at the eternal interest and salvation of that immortal spirit.

Would the eternal Son of God, think you, who tho' it no robbery to be equal with God, have submitted to such horrid indignities, and endured such cruel sufferings, and

and been nailed to the accursed tree, only to have redeemed a refined lump of clay from the grave, that it might enjoy a little sensitive happiness in common with, or rather inferiour to, that of the beasts of the field? or even to redeem a rational soul, from a temporal and temporary evil; and to put it in possession of a short-liv'd, fleeting and uncertain happiness? Surely no: Christ had not been crucify'd, but to redeem an immortal spirit from endless misery, and to bring it to the full enjoyment of eternal bliss.

This is a clear case not only from express revelation, the meaning and force of which cannot be evaded by any just rules of construction, but to suppose the contrary, would greatly eclipse the glory of this Divine Plan, and implies an absurd disproportion between the means and the end.

Thus I think it is evident, that the knowledge of Christ crucified is the most excellent, necessary, and important knowledge in the world, both when consider'd in itself, and with relation to those things, which stand in necessary and inseparable connexion with it. All other knowledge deserves the name of ignorance in comparison of this; yea all other knowledge will leave men for ever miserable without this. Where no vision, no knowledge of these things is, we see not, but the people must perish. For *this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,* John 17. 3. *Neither is their salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved.* Acts 4. 12. O how necessary! how important then is the knowledge of a crucify'd Christ, and the way of salvation by him, since there is salvation in none other.

But then it is always to be remember'd, and carefully observ'd, that there are two kinds of this knowledge, the one historical and speculative, which may be common to the natural and unregenerate man with the child of God; the

the other experimental and divine, which is peculiar to God's own children.

The one is to be obtain'd by natural means, and so can't reasonably be expected to produce a supernatural effect; the other is taught or rather impress'd by the power and Spirit of God, and so is like to be seen in the saving influences and effects of it upon both heart and life. This distinction is obvious to every one that is in any measure acquainted with mankind. For it is but too common to observe, that some by means of a religious education, and others by their own care and industry, have attain'd a competent head-knowledge of all the important doctrines of the gospel; and yet live as loose and profligate lives as the most ignorant heathen. They have very knowing and orthodox heads, but very wicked hearts.

While others, who have been taught of God to know Jesus Christ and him crucify'd, have walk'd circumspectly all their days, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Accordingly our Saviour says, *if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

Thus I have imperfectly touch'd on the first head propos'd, I come to the second which is,

II. It should be the great aim, and principal endeavour of a gospel minister, to cultivate this knowledge in his own mind, and in the minds of his hearers.

The priests lips should preserve knowledge, not only for his own use, but for the use of his hearers. Hence the ministers of the word are called *lights*, Matt. 5. 14. because they are to spread the knowledge of Christ, and the light of his gospel. They are call'd *stars*, Rev. 1. 20. because they are to shed light as well as other benign influences around them. John Baptist is said to have been *a burning and a shining light*, and St. Paul is said to be *set*

set as a light to the Gentiles; because he was to be the great instrument of enlightening their minds in the knowledge of a crucify'd Christ.

Now as it is reasonably to be expected, that the ministers of the gospel should have knowledge and communicate it; so it is quite obvious, that they should be most careful to communicate that knowledge which is most excellent in itself and most necessary and important to themselves and others.

Of all knowledge, methinks, it is most suitable that a gospel minister should know his master and his master's religion, and be above all things engaged to promote his cause and kingdom in the world. He shou'd make all other studies subordinate, and, as much as may be subservient to this; so far as he does thus, he acts in character. He professeth to be the minister and servant of a crucify'd Christ, him therefore he shou'd preach, and his cause he shou'd, by all means, endeavour to promote. You easily perceive by what I said before, that as I do not understand the knowledge of Christ crucify'd to be limited to this particular doctrine and fact which immediately relates to the crucifixion of Christ, but as including and comprehending those truths and doctrines which are peculiar to the gospel; so here I would include all those things which are peculiar to the gospel dispensation, for it is JESUS CHRIST, as well as HIM CRUCIFY'D, that the gospel minister shou'd know and preach. Now the gospel plan is built, as I conceive, on the supposition of man's apostacy from God, by which he is bro't into a state, every way miserable. It was in this situation, every way forlorn and helpless, that the infinite God cast an eye of compassion on him, and, his bowels being mov'd to see his own image thus defac'd, and the work of his own hands thus weltering in blood, kindly propos'd that a remedy shou'd be sought, and a ransom found, by the virtue and value of which, justice might be satisfied, the holiness of God vindicated, the divine anger appeas'd, the honour of God's law secur'd,

cur'd, and yet room left for the exercise of mercy on the rebel sinner.

Now when there was none among all the hierarchy of heaven, in whom such mighty love was found, who dar'd to undertake, or indeed was equal to the mighty task ; the Son of God, the second person in the adorable Trinity, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, He, when none else would, yea when none else could, undertook and perfected the great, the amazing work of man's redemption ; and all in a way which tends to humble the pride of man, and to exalt the riches of divine power, wisdom and grace. The great *Milton* has touch'd this tho't, and pursu'd it with great strength and beauty in his poem entitled, *Paradise Lost*, in the 3^d book towards the beginning. But we have it more concisely and comprehensively in that more sure word of prophecy by the inspir'd penman, *Gen. 3. 15*.

This gospel plan was more darkly revealed under the Jewish dispensation by shadows and resemblances, and so more obscurely inculcated by the ministers of that day ; but more clearly by Christ and his apostles, by whom the method which God has contriv'd for the advancement of his own glory in the salvation of sinners, is clearly manifested ; he has given it in charge therefore to his ministers to publish the glad tidings of salvation by a crucify'd Christ. The knowledge of this saviour therefore, and the knowledge of that method of salvation which God has revealed by him, including those things which are closely connected herewith, and dependent hereon, I take to be that knowledge which above all other a gospel minister is to cultivate in his own mind, and in the minds of his hearers. Always however carefully remembering, that the salvation of a sinner by a crucify'd Christ, implies the saving him from his sins, not in them. *Tit. 2. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*

Now, that the knowledge of a crucify'd Christ, and of that gospel which he has publish'd to the world, (being but so many links of one and the same chain) I say that this is the knowledge which it is the gospel minister's business to cultivate, will appear evident by only considering, what was said under the foregoing observation ; for if it is the ministers work to get and communicate knowledge, and the apostle enjoins it upon his son *Timothy* to give attendance to reading, to meditate upon these things, and to give himself to them that his profiting (i. e. in knowledge) might appear to all ; if this be the case, and the knowledge of Christ and his gospel is the most excellent and important knowledge, both to the minister himself, and those that hear him ; then doubtless this is the knowledge which above all other, he shou'd treasure up and communicate as opportunity presents, bringing out of his treasure, like a good house-holder, things new and old, for the entertainment, instruction and edification of the flock of God. Preaching peace by Jesus Christ who is Lord of all, who is our peace, and by whose blood which was shed on the cross, they who are by nature afar off are made nigh.

This is that gospel which Christ himself gave it in commission to preach to all the world, Mark 16. 15. *Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.* The gospel, and what is the gospel, but the good news of salvation by a crucify'd Christ ?

This therefore was their work ; and this they fail'd not to apply themselves diligently to, nor were they asham'd of the cross of Christ, nor to own themselves the servants and disciples of a crucify'd Jesus ; tho' this was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. 1. 23.

And this was what the great and learned apostle of the Gentiles, was determin'd chiefly to insist upon while among the polite Literati of *Corinth* ; and to let them know, that he shou'd not deviate from the gospel plan to gratify their

their particular humour and taste in his preaching, but adhere to his commission which was to preach the gospel, without being ashamed to own, that the saviour in whom he believ'd, and propos'd to others as the object of their faith, and the foundation of their hope and trust ; was the despised *Jesus of Nazareth*, who was crucify'd without the gates of *Jerusalem*. And accordingly, that all who will be his disciples, must take up the cross, and crucify the flesh with the affections thereof, and become obedient to him, who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

If any should be at a loss, after all I have said, fully to comprehend my meaning, let me say in a word, that I apprehend it to be the business of a gospel minister in his preaching to insist principally on those doctrines which are peculiar to the gospel, and commonly called the doctrines of grace, and to let his hearers know in what way they are to hope and expect to be sav'd under the gospel, not by works, lest any man should boast, but that *it is of faith, that it might be by grace.*

And tho' I know very well, that virtue and morality are to be urg'd upon our hearers, and that the morality of the gospel is most refin'd and sublime, and that the more a christian spirit and temper does prevail in any soul, the more it will be conform'd to these moral precepts ; yet methinks a gospel minister shou'd know and teach that the tree must be good, or the fruit cannot be so ; that the soul must be renew'd, before it can practice evangelical morality ; that the branch must be engrafted into Christ, before it can bear fruit ; and that they must be created anew in Christ Jesus, who would perform good works in a gospel sense. And after all, gospel morality shou'd be urg'd and recommended by gospel motives.

It were a shame methinks that a minister of Christ should discourse to his people in such a manner, as that his hearers should not be able to judge by all he says whe-

ther he is a christian or a heathen ; which is, (I am sorry to say it) but too much the case of some, who call themselves ministers of Christ in the christian world at this day.

No doubt a *Seneca* or a *Cicero* may paint moral virtue in such amiable colours, as that the portraiture shall charm the beholder, and he shall rise from his entertainment extremely gratify'd, and fully resolved to practice as he has been taught ; yet for all that he has been told by the moralist, he must do this in his own strength ; and what is like to be the event of this, but that he riseth up to fall ; if it be true, as our Saviour has taught us, *That of our selves we can do nothing* ; and his apostle, that *all our sufficiency is of God* ?

In short, without faith it is impossible to please God ; and yet it is no less true, that faith without works is dead being alone. So that men are to be led to Christ for life and strength to enable them to perform moral Duties ; and to depend upon him for acceptance in them.

Thus must we *work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling* ; always remembering for our humiliation, as well as encouragement, that *'tis God must work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. So then, ministers are to be embassadors for Christ, and to entreat men in his stead to be reconciled to God, thro' the blood of the cross.

Thus leading men into the knowledge of that way of salvation which God has contriv'd by a crucify'd Christ, and perswading them to seek after that saving acquaintance with him, whereby good, temporal, spiritual and eternal, shall come to their souls.

Always bearing in mind, that of our faithfulness in this work, we must shortly give account to him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men : And that if we be found faithful, we shall be unto God, a sweet favour of Christ, both in them that are saved and in them that are lost : To the one we are a favour of death unto death, and to the other a favour of life

life unto life ; and, *who is sufficient for these things?* may every minister of the gospel well say, since no less than the great apostle *Paul* has said it before him, 2 Cor. 2. 16.

This for the *doctrinal* part, the *improvement* remains,

And here suffer me to enter a few things by way of caution, least false inferences be drawn from what has been said. For,

First, It does by no means follow from the premises, that all kinds of learning and knowledge are useless to a gospel minister, save that of Jesus Christ and him crucify'd, and the things which are necessarily connected with it.

For altho', it has, I think, been shown that this knowledge is most excellent and important, yet there are other parts of learning which are very useful, and in some cases necessary to a gospel minister. A competent skill in the learned languages is in some instances, necessary, in order to a right understanding of the sacred oracles, and to lay open the beauty and strength of the inspired writings, as well as to avoid being imposed on by infidels and hereticks, who would triumph in the ignorance of those, who are set for the defence of the gospel, and to propagate the peculiar doctrines of it to the world. By this means they would be able without being detected or confuted, to wrest the scriptures, not only to their own but to the destruction of others.

For instance, what a singular advantage must it put into the hands of the *Pope* and his party, if the clergy of the protestant churches were illiterate men? They wou'd soon, no doubt, make great addition to the corruptions, adulterations, and base mixtures of their own, which they have already bro't into their church.

The same may be said of infidels, hereticks and erroneous persons of all sorts, many of whom, it must be allowed

lowed are very learned men, and whose mouths it requires no small degree of learning to be able to stop.

In truth, a learned ministry, are under God the bulwarks of the christian church, however they may have been slighted, ill-treated, and tho't needless, if not hurtful, by some zealous but misguided brethren.

So that, altho' the saving knowledge of a crucify'd Christ, is the most excellent and important, yet this does not hinder but that other knowledge may be useful and needful, and may greatly serve the cause of Christ and his religion. Logick, philosophy and history have all their place, but the most necessary and important things should be first and most regarded by the gospel minister, especially in his discourses from the pulpit.

2dly. Nor yet may we infer from what has been said, that little learning and small powers and qualifications are sufficient for a gospel minister, or that his work is easy, and limited to a small circle.

Perhaps some may be ready to conclude, that if the great apostle determin'd to know and preach nothing in so polite a city as *Corinth*, but Jesus Christ and him crucify'd, and if this be really the most excellent and important knowledge, and the grand point which gospel ministers are to cultivate the knowledge of, in their own minds, and in the minds of others: then any honest man of common sense may be a minister, a very small degree of learning or parts are needful for this, and very little time or pains, need to be employ'd about it. But this will appear to be a great mistake if we consider first, how much is comprehended in the knowledge of Christ and him crucify'd; even the whole gospel plan as such.

And tho' the essentials of this to salvation, are such, as we trust require only small capacity, and little learning to know and understand; yet there are contained in it also many depths and mysteries, many things so hard to be understood, as that the most learned and sagacious cannot fully comprehend and fathom, which leave room for
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the exercise of the most superior powers, and for the display of the most profound learning to the world's end ; which the apostle tells us the unlearned do wrest to their own destruction, and if these are teachers it must be to the danger of others also.

Besides, how hard is it to convince those who are the enemies of the truth, and who speak evil of those things which they do not understand ; to persuade natural and unregenerate men to receive the truth as it is in Jesus, when it is so contrary to the bent and inclination of their own hearts ; so humbling to their pride, so mortifying to their lusts, and does curtail and retrench their exorbitant appetites and vicious inclinations, and so flatly condemn their wicked practices !

He that considers the strength of the opposition that lies against the faithful minister of the gospel, from without & from within ; the concernment of men's souls therein and the account that must be given, the important consequences one way and another, to himself and others ; I say, he that will impartially consider these things, with many others that belong to the case, will easily perceive that no small degree of learning, prudence, courage, diligence and industry as well as grace, is sufficient for a gospel minister.

And however some in the ministry, may seem to make a light and easy matter of it, and if they have learning, parts and many amiable gifts and qualifications for the ministry, yet neglect them, and take little pains in their work ; yet I am sure every faithful minister of Jesus Christ will bear me witness, that all his parts and learnings, all his gifts and graces, are little enough to carry him comfortably along in his work ; that he is many a time ready to sink under discouragement, and to wish with the prophet *Jeremiah 9. 12. O that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people and go from them.* Especially when they consider the untractable disposition of their people, the reluctance they

they find within themselves to many parts of their duty ; their own weakness and insufficiency for the work, and the awful account they must one day give to Him, who is the judge of all.

He that has any sense of what is the true state of the case, as to these and such like things, and of what passes thro' the mind of the faithful minister on these accounts, will not, cannot envy, but pity and pray for him.

Suffer me then, as led by the consideration of these things, to offer a word of exhortation and consolation to the ministers of the gospel here present.

My reverend Fathers and Brethren,

We are engag'd in a difficult, but important work ; we find in our selves, as well as in our hearers, a natural backwardness to comply with that method which God has contriv'd for the recovery of lost sinners by a crucify'd Christ, and we have all the powers of darkness engag'd to obstruct, the effectual cultivation of the knowledge of this saviour, in our selves or others.

Let us therefore be exhorted to engage heartily in our work, and be resolved to employ all our powers and faculties in it, yet let us engage in his name and strength, who having spoiled principalities and powers, made a shew of them openly, and triumph'd over them.

I know, my fathers and brethren, in some measure at least your burdens, your difficulties, and your discouragements from within and from without ; yet let us endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ ; let us take heed to our selves and to our doctrine, and continue in them ; let us approve our selves ministers of the new-testament, not of the letter but of the spirit ; improving the powers and faculties God has given us, to persuade sinners to accept of the sacrifice which he has provided, and then we shall have reason to hope, that when he, who is the chief shepherd shall appear we shall appear with him in glory, be acquitted with a well-done, and receive the reward of faithful servants.

For encouragement therefore, Let us remember that the cause is the Lord's ; we are ambassadors for God, as well as the servants of men's souls for Christ's sake.

If, therefore we be workers together with God, we know that he who is with us, is greater and stronger than all those that are or can be against us.

Our work indeed is honourable : yet have we no cause to be elated, when we remember that it is also exceedingly difficult, we ourselves very unworthy of it, and unequal to it : Yet this is our comfort and encouragement, we have a kind, compassionate master, who knows and has had a feeling of our infirmities ; and who has graciously promis'd to be with his sincere faithful ministers even to the end of the world.

Suffer me now, *dear Sir*, Since it is at your desire I stand in this place this day, to address my self to you, with the affection of a brother, and with the plainness and sincerity of a friend, and as to one who is just about to take the pastoral care of a large flock of precious and immortal souls.

We, who have been admitted to the office, and employed in the work before you, know the difficulties and pressures you must expect. And tho' I would say nothing to discourage or dishearten you, since I trust you are called of God to engage in this work ; yet I would not hide it from you, that if you approve your self a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, you are like to find enough, in the course of your ministry, tho' you should determine to know nothing among this people but Jesus Christ and him crucify'd ; to employ all your learning, to try every power and faculty, every grace and virtue you are possessed of.

To enlighten the ignorant, to stop the mouths of gainers, to deal faithfully with and reduce those that err, both in principle and in practice, to awaken the stupid and thoughtless, to confirm and establish the doubting, to comfort

comfort and strengthen the weak and feeble of the flock, to bring the saints and people of God on their way with comfort, and like a faithful steward to give every one their portion in due season, requires no small degree of acquaintance with religion, with men, with your own heart, and with the methods of God's grace in bringing home souls to Christ ; together with great diligence and application to the work of your ministry.

I trust, *Sir*, You are well satisfied in, after having seriously weighed the motives which have induc'd you to engage in this important work. Not, I presume with a view to live at ease, and spend your life in pleasure and amusements : Not with any ambitious aims at raising a fortune, or for the sake of fame and applause : For he that will live of the gospel, as every faithful minister ought, must in our country, and in these days, be content with small things ; and be prepared to go thro' evil report as well as good. Seekest thou great things for thy self ? seek them not : Seek to be faithful to your master, and to the souls committed to your charge, and you need not fear a competency ; and let this make you content.

My Friend and Brother,

We trust that a sincere desire to promote the glory of God, the interest of Christ's kingdom, and the spiritual good of this people, hath been the principal motive to perswade you to leave your native home, to settle in *Windsor*.

And give me leave to say to you, that to cultivate the knowledge of a crucify'd Christ, is a view worthy of you as a disciple & minister of Christ. And in doing this, *Sir*, you will find work enough, and be employ'd as a minister of Christ ought to be. Here are a large number of precious souls belonging to this parish : And tho' we would charitably hope, that by the blessing of God on the past labours of your aged, pious and worthy predecessor, a good number of them are brought into a saving acquaintance with a once crucify'd, now exalted and glorify'd
Christ ;

Christ ; yet it is well if there are not many who are estranged from him to this day.

Some perhaps are grown old and hardned in a state of estrangement from Christ; some may have drank in strong prejudices against the gospel way of salvation, and chuse to be led on in the fashionable flesh-pleasing way of establishing a righteousness of their own, by practising, or rather fancying they practice moral virtue ; others, perhaps, who verging to the other extream, would hear of nothing but faith, and this too a lifeless speculative thing, which is the product of nothing but their own pride and a heated imagination ; but more who are tho'tless and secure, and will give you no trouble, so you will leave them to go on quietly in the way of their own hearts, and in the sight of their own eyes.

Now it must be your sincere desire and unwearied endeavour to bring all these to a saving acquaintance with Jesus Christ, and the method of salvation which God has contrived thro' the blood of the cross.

And to this end, besides what you do in a more private way as opportunity shall offer, and prudence direct, you will generally chuse Gospel-Subjects ; and be sure to treat every subject you take in hand in a gospel way, giving it an evangelical turn, proving it by gospel arguments, and urging it on your people by gospel motives. And you will doubtless by experience find, that a clear method, an easy stile, and an experimental searching way of preaching, will be most profitable to the bulk of your hearers.

Sublime speculative notions and metaphysical niceties, are lost upon common hearers, and generally not desired from the pulpit on common occasions by the more judicious and learned, to be sure not if they are serious. Only consider the greatness and solemnity of that charge which you are presently to receive, and the awfully strict account you are one day to give up to your great Lord & Master ; and then take that course which your own con-

science, directed by the word of God, tells you is the most likely method to gain you acquittance and applause in that day.

Remember, *my dear Brother*, and let it sink down into your heart, what is recorded, Ezek. 3. 17, 18. *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, therefore hear the word from my mouth, and give them warning from me: When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his Life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. O be faithful, and God grant you may be successful, and make you a spiritual father of many spiritual children here; that in the great day you may with a holy boldness lift up your head among a numerous progeny of spiritual children, and say, Lord here am I, and the children which thou hast graciously given me; and have it for your reward to shine with peculiar lustre as a star of the first magnitude forever and ever.*

A few words to the people of God in this place:

Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

'Tis with pleasure we observe your desire and care to continue the gospel and the ordinances of it among you; by settling another while your former pastor yet survives. It has pleased the great head of the church to continue him long among you, we trust a rich blessing: May the God of all grace and consolation, support and comfort him under the growing infirmities of age, and at length receive him to a crown of life which fadeth not away! And may the good seed which he has been sowing here yet spring up, and bring forth fruit abundantly, by the blessing of God on the pious care and cultivation of this *young man* who is now to be set over you in the Lord! May he also be long continu'd a rich blessing, and may you all rejoice in his light for a great while to come!

You

You have call'd him far from his relations, and former friends and acquaintance, to whom he is dear, and who wou'd not, I am well assured, have consented to his settling so far from them, if it had not been with a view to the call of God, which they tho't appeared in it, and a hope that he might be an instrument of doing service for God and your souls in this place ; and you have call'd him to a great and difficult work ; you will therefore think it your part now to be kind to him and tender of him ; not only by ministring freely and chearfully to his support, but by endeavouring to make his work, in itself difficult, as easy and pleasant to him as possible ; by opening not only your ears but your hearts to receive his instructions so far as they are agreeable to the word of God. By seeking above all things, to become savingly acquainted with Christ ; and by a conversation and behaviour agreeable to such a character. It will, I doubt not, always be the joy of his heart, to see you walking in the truth ; and his grief, when he is obliged to rebuke any of you, either publickly or privately.

O how will it abate the aking of his heart when he is call'd to visit any on a sick and dying bed, which is a time above all others when you will need and desire comfort ; if he shall find ground for the administring cordials, and to encourage you to hope for the glory of God ! Let not therefore your behaviour in a time of health be such, as to lay a temptation before him, to wrong both his own soul and your's at such a time, either by withholding what is needful, or giving that which is not due.

Consider seriously the greatness and the difficulties of his work, and pray earnestly and incessantly for him, that he may be faithful and successful in it.

We wish you a blessing from the house of the Lord this day, and that he and you may be mutual blessings to one another here, and each other's crown and rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

One

One word to this numerous audience and I have done.

This is the first and, it is most probable, will be the last opportunity I shall ever have of speaking the word of God to by far the greatest part of you.

Let me take this opportunity then to say, it is of everlasting concernment to you and me, that we become savingly acquainted with Jesus Christ, he is the only saviour of lost sinners; and 'tis only by the merit of that righteousness which he has wro't, and the virtue and value of that blood which he shed on the cross, that our sins can be done away, and our souls justify'd and sav'd. Let it therefore be our first and greatest care that we be interested in him by a faith which is of a divine operation, which shall purify our hearts, and work by love, and be in us a living principle of all holy obedience.

And remember, 'tis he that is appointed of God to judge the world, and to him both you and I must one day give up our accounts, and by him that our condition must be determined for happiness inconceivable, or misery intolerable, for a long, long eternity. If therefore we live and die estranged from him, what can the event be, but that he will in that day denounce against us those heart-piercing, soul-killing words; "Depart hence I know you not, ye workers of iniquity."

Therefore let us every one acquaint our selves now with him, and be at peace, thereby good, everlasting good shall come unto our souls;

Which God grant for his mercy's sake in Christ Jesus: to whom be glory for ever. AMEN.

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